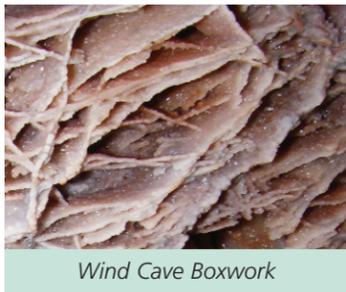




# Passages

## Returning the Bison to Wind Cave National Park

The mixed-grass prairie of Wind Cave National Park has a timeless quality. Its wind-blown grasses, grazing bison, chirping prairie dogs, and plentiful wildlife seem to be in perfect harmony with the surrounding landscape. Yet when established in 1903, much of what makes Wind Cave National Park unique and special was missing. The cave was protected and was receiving all of the attention; its beauty and unusual nature were amazing visitors and geologist from around the world. The surface world, on the other hand, was the realm of ranchers and farmers. The prairie's special beauties and importance had not been discovered.



Wind Cave Boxwork

When Wind Cave National Park was created the great herds of bison that roamed the land were a thing of the past. Prairie dog towns which had extended for hundreds of miles were only a vague memory. The eastern elk was extinct and the Rocky Mountain elk had moved to remote mountainous areas. The pronghorn antelope were moving to the high plains of Wyoming, Montana, and points west. As the land was plowed and fenced, patches of untouched prairie became fewer and farther between.

its habitat. And in this instance, a part of the mixed-grass prairie was protected.

In 1935, the Game Preserve was merged into Wind Cave National Park. Soon thereafter Civilian Conservation Corps crews working at the park began removing internal fences opening the entire 11,000 acres for the wildlife to roam. Game Warden A.P. Chambers reported its affect: *It was interesting to watch the antelope. . . They covered the entire east range, running hither and yon.*



Rocky Mountain Elk

In the 1940s, managers recognized that the best way to protect the land was to reestablish the native prairie grasses that had survived droughts and disasters for eons. They began replanting these native grasses and today, according to The Nature Conservancy, the park has several exemplary vegetative sites that are representative of those that once covered the Great Plains. Additional protection for the prairie ecosystem occurred in the early 1970s when the park initiated a prescribed burn policy. Fire is a tool that can be used



It was barely more than a hundred years ago that an effort was made to protect prairie wildlife and their habitat. Wind Cave National Park played a major role in protecting both.

For the buffalo, the story began when people in the mid-1870s started protesting the wanton killing of these amazing animals. Their efforts resulted in the creation of the American Bison Society. This group of individuals was interested in preserving the American bison by establishing bison herds throughout the country. Out of several possible sites in South Dakota, Wind Cave National Park was chosen, and in 1912, the Wind Cave National Game Preserve was created.

The following year, a mere 100 years ago, the bison arrived. The fourteen bison that started the Wind Cave herd in 1913 came as a gift from the American Bison Society and the New York Zoological Society. Later an additional six bison joined the herd from Yellowstone National Park. To read more about these events, visit page 4 of this newspaper.

The following year, 1914, the elk and pronghorn antelope arrived. The challenges of managing the wildlife were great, but the sustained effort paid off in a way probably not foreseen by the American Bison Society. To protect an animal, you also have to protect

to thin the forest and protect the prairie from encroaching ponderosa pine trees.

In 2007, the tradition of protecting native plants and animals continued when black-footed ferrets were returned to the park's prairie dog towns. Black-footed ferrets are part of a prairie ecosystem that has been drastically altered and reduced in size over the past century. By reintroducing the endangered black-footed ferret, the park is assisting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife



Black-footed Ferret

Service to recover the ferrets from near extinction and enhancing the park's prairie ecosystem. The current population of ferrets in the park is about 60 animals.

Wind Cave National Park has played an important part in the history of restoring a small portion of the Great Plains. The return of the bison, elk, pronghorn, black-footed ferret, and the protection of a shrinking habitat provides us with the opportunity to see the prairie in its splendor and to experience a naturally functioning system with most of the pieces in place.

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**Follow us on Facebook**  
Wind Cave National Park

**In Case of Emergency  
Dial 911**

**Welcome from the Superintendent**



Welcome to Wind Cave National Park. This national park is one of the oldest in the country. Established in 1903, it was the eighth national park created and the first set aside to protect a cave.

While Wind Cave is the major attraction with its unique boxwork and significant underground cave passageways, the surface resources, including both natural and cultural resources, are also worth the stop. The buildings around the visitor center date back to the 1930s Civilian Conservation Corps. The wildlife such as bison, elk, mule deer, pronghorn antelope, prairie dogs, and black-foot ferrets are also exciting to view.

Today, visitors from around the world come to see these two parks in one. Our hope is that you have a safe and enjoyable visit to Wind Cave National Park, take plenty of pictures, participate in our programs, and leave nothing behind but footprints.

Travel Safe,

Vidal Davila  
Superintendent

# Simple Rules for Safety and to Protect Park Resources

## Protecting the Park

Park resources are for everyone to enjoy. **Do not disturb or remove plants, wildlife, antlers, bones, rocks, or any other natural or cultural feature.** They are protected by federal law. These resources are all part of the park's ecosystem and are important to the park's history and to the survival of other animals and plants. Please leave these objects undisturbed so the next visitor can enjoy them.



## Weapons

As of February 22, 2010, a new federal law allows people who can legally possess firearms under federal, South Dakota, and local laws to possess firearms while visiting Wind Cave National Park. **However, hunting and/or the use of firearms is still prohibited.** It is the visitor's responsibility to under-

stand and comply with all applicable state, local, and federal firearms laws. **Federal law prohibits firearms in certain facilities in this park;** these places are posted with signs at public entrances. If you have questions, please contact the park at 605-745-4600.

## Wildlife

**Animals in the park are wild and unpredictable. Do not approach or attempt to feed them.** Feeding animals causes them to become dependent on handouts and they may fail to survive the winter. Animals that are fed are attracted to highways where they can be struck by vehicles.

Be aware that rattlesnakes are sometimes found in prairie dog towns and other areas of the park. Bison also frequent prairie dog towns. They can run 35 miles per hour and may weigh a ton! Stay a

safe distance from all wildlife - at least 100 yards from bison and elk.

## Pets

To protect your pet and park wildlife remember: **pets are prohibited in the backcountry and on most hiking trails.** Pets are permitted on the Prairie Vista Nature Trail near the picnic area. Be sure to clean up after your pet. Pets may not be left unattended and must be on a leash at all times. Be aware that ticks are common in high grass. They may affect your pet and you.

**Do not leave your pets in your vehicle while visiting the cave or for any length of time.** The temperatures inside a vehicle can become extreme, putting your pet in grave danger. Kennel space is available in Hot Springs or Custer. Pets may not be left unattended outside of a vehicle, even if they are leashed.

## Traveling in the Park

**All vehicles (including bicycles) must remain on roadways** that are open to the public. Off-road driving or bicycle riding is prohibited.

## Slow down and enjoy the view!

When driving park roads, **obey all speed limits.** They are strictly enforced to protect you and the wildlife. In the last twenty years over eighty bison have been struck and killed by motor vehicles in the park. You can help protect the wildlife; obey all posted speed limits and watch out for animals on the road - they may appear suddenly. Keep your seatbelt fastened.



Drive safely, watch for animals on the road

# Planning Your Visit

## Visitor Center

The Wind Cave Visitor Center is a great place to start your park visit. The visitor center is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. daily, with extended hours during the summer. The visitor center is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. All cave tours begin at the visitor center and are offered daily throughout the year when the visitor center is open. For more information see page 7.

Exhibits, maps, book sales, backcountry permits, information about cave tours and ranger programs, lost-and-found services, and Federal Recreational Lands Passes are available here.

## Ranger Programs

When visiting the park, plan to attend a ranger-led program. While cave tours are offered all year long, additional programs are presented in the summer. For more information about ranger programs and cave tours see page 6.



## Campground

The Elk Mountain Campground is located one mile north of the visitor center. Parts of the campground may be closed temporarily throughout the summer due to several construction projects. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Occupancy of campsites is on a first-come, first-served basis; generally the campground does not fill. Each site accommodates up to eight people and two vehicles. Two sites are available for campers with disabilities.

The fee for camping is \$12 per night, per site. In the off-season when facilities are limited, the fee is \$6 per night. Holders of the Federal Recreational Lands Senior or Access pass pay half price. Group camping is available by reservation. For group reservations call the park



at 605-745-4600.

The campground has restrooms with cold water and flush toilets but no showers, electrical hook-ups, or dump stations. Firewood is available for campers.

## Backcountry Camping

Wind Cave National Park's backcountry offers visitors an excellent opportunity to experience and enjoy the abundant resources of the park. Backcountry camping is permitted in the northwestern part of the park. Several habitats and a variety of plants and animals can be found in this area.

**Backcountry campers must have a permit.** Permits are free and can be obtained at the visitor center. For your safety and for the protection of park resources, follow all regulations during your stay. Leave no trace of your visit by packing out what you pack in. **Pets are not permitted in the backcountry.**

## Hiking Safely

When hiking park trails (see next page) **make sure to carry plenty of water** as daytime temperatures in the summer can exceed 100°F (38°C). Water is not readily available along the trails. Any water found in the backcountry should be treated or boiled before drinking.

Flies, mosquitoes, and wood ticks can be found in the wetter areas of the park. Be watchful for prairie rattlesnakes in prairie dog towns and near cliffs and rocky areas.

Rattlesnakes will not usually strike unless provoked.

## Bicycling

Bicycling is limited to established park roads that are open to the public. **Bicycling off road, on trails, or in the backcountry is prohibited.** When bicycling, be aware that animals roam freely through the park. Keep a safe distance from bison and all wild animals. Highway U.S. 385 has wider shoulders for bicyclists than SD Hwy 87 where the road is winding and narrow. Bicyclists should take precautions when on this road. Traveling the park's back roads, NPS 5 and 6, provides a great opportunity to see the prairie area of the park and the animals living there.



## Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is a wonderful way to experience the park's backcountry. **All horse and pack animal use requires a free permit** which may be obtained at the visitor center. Almost all of the park is open to riding; however, **riding is prohibited directly on any hiking trail, near water sources, on roadways, and in the campground and picnic areas.**

## Weather

Summer in the southern Black Hills brings warm daytime temperatures with cool evenings. Thunderstorms are common in June and July and occasionally in August. These thun-

derstorms can be dangerous with large hail and severe lightning. Slow-moving storms can dump large amounts of rain over a small area. The steep canyons, rock cliffs, and small creeks of the Black Hills are prone to flash flooding. Be cautious when camping near a creek bed even if it is dry. Move uphill if flooding starts.

## Picnicking

The park's picnic area is located ¼ mile north of the visitor center and is open year-round. The picnic area contains tables and fire grates. Drinking water is available in the summer months.

## Restrooms and Drinking Water

Restrooms are available year-round at the visitor center and picnic area. **Please help conserve water, it is important to the wildlife, the cave, and all of us.** The visitor center has a water bottle refilling station.

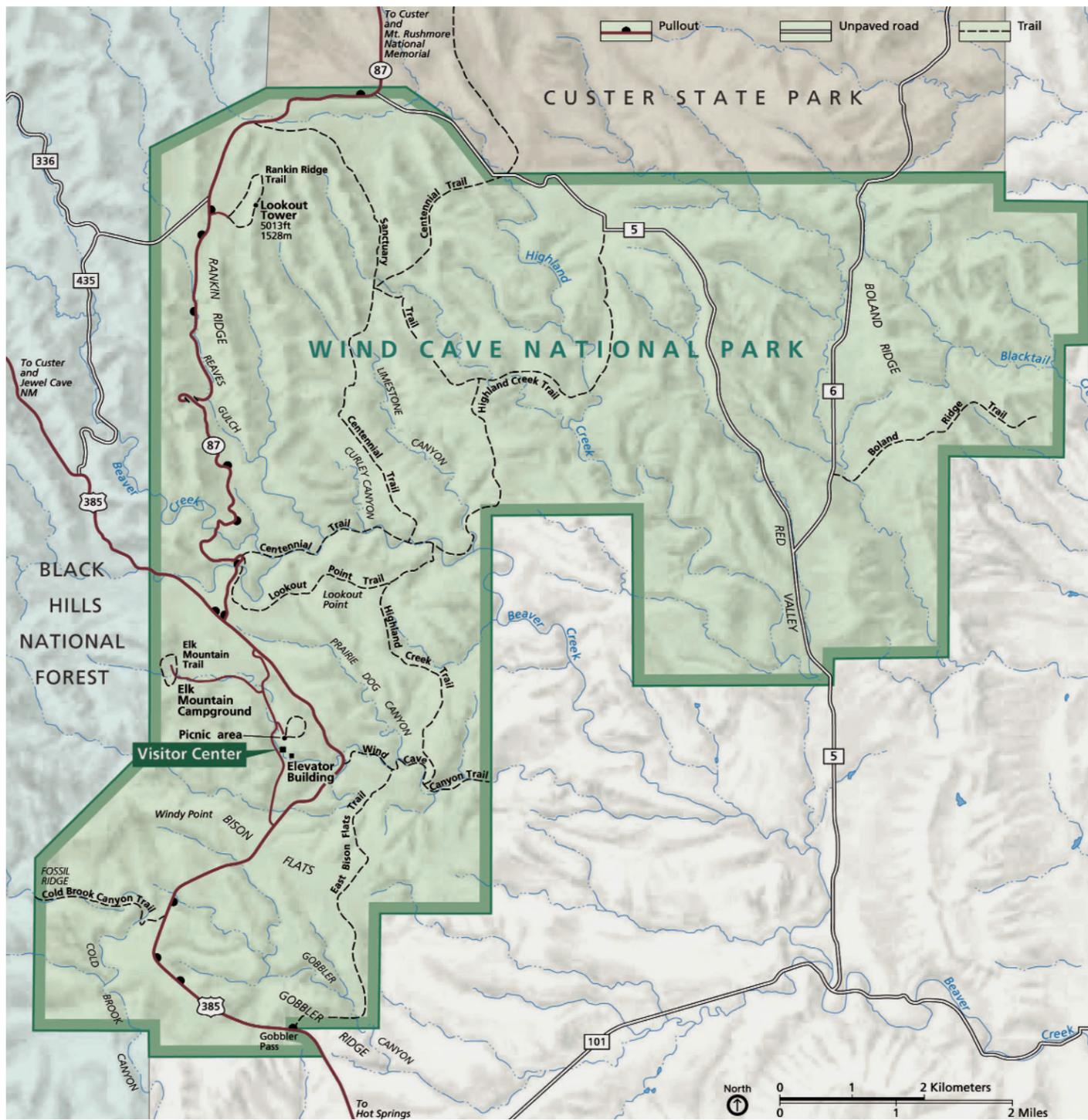
## Trash and Recycling

Trash receptacles are available at the visitor center, the picnic area, and all waiting areas for tours. Recycling facilities are also available at these areas. The park recycles glass, aluminum cans, steel cans, and plastic containers with PETE 1 or HDPE 2 markings. Please rinse recyclables before placing them in containers.

## Area Services

The park has limited food and beverage vending services in the visitor center. The park has no lodging, gasoline, grocery, or restaurant services. These are available in nearby towns: Hot Springs (15 minutes south) and Custer (25 minutes north). For information regarding services in Hot Springs, call 800-325-6991. For Custer, call 800-992-9818. Lodging, gasoline, and some grocery services are located in Custer State Park on the north border of Wind Cave NP.

# Hiking



## HIKING IN THE PARK

Wind Cave National Park includes 28,295 acres of prairie grasslands and ponderosa pine forest. The park is a fascinating combination of ecosystems where eastern habitats meet western ones. They support a diverse assortment of life. Hiking any of the 30 miles of trails can help visitors better understand the park. You may even want to leave the trails and travel cross-country along the ridges, through the canyons, or across the rolling prairie. A topographic map is recommended and can be purchased at the visitor center.

## CENTENNIAL TRAIL

An excellent example of the diversity of the park can be seen by hiking Wind Cave's six-mile section of the Centennial Trail. This trail crosses the prairie, climbs the forested ridges, and explores the wetter, riparian habitat of Beaver Creek. The 111-mile Centennial Trail meanders from Wind Cave National Park north through the Black Hills.

## NATURE TRAILS

There are two nature trails in the park. **The Rankin Ridge Nature Trail** located north of the Visitor Center on SD Hwy 87 leads to the highest point in the park where the views are spectacular. **The Prairie Vista Nature Trail** starts at the visitor center and explores the secrets of the prairie. It too leads to panoramic vistas of the park. Each trail is about one mile in length. Informational signs are available on the trails or booklets are available for purchase at the trailheads.

## Hiking Trails

	One-way Length	Difficulty	Description
<b>Cold Brook Canyon Trail</b>	1.4 miles (2.3 km)	Moderately Strenuous	The trail begins south of the visitor center on the west side of U.S. Highway 385. This trail travels through a forested area, traverses a small prairie dog town, and winds through Cold Brook Canyon to the park boundary fence. The open prairie is a good place to see raptors such as prairie falcons.
<b>Wind Cave Canyon Trail</b>	1.8 miles (2.9 km)	Easy	This former road follows Wind Cave Canyon to the park boundary fence. Wind Cave Canyon is one of the best places for bird watching. Limestone cliffs provide good nesting areas for cliff swallows, canyon wrens, and great horned owls. Standing dead trees serve as homes for red-headed and Lewis's woodpeckers.
<b>East Bison Flats Trail</b>	3.7 miles (6 km)	Moderately Strenuous	Hike one-half mile down the Wind Cave Canyon Trail to pick up the East Bison Flats Trail. This trail leads hikers across the rolling hills of the prairie. From this trail you may see panoramic views of Wind Cave National Park, Buffalo Gap, and the Black Hills.
<b>Lookout Point Trail</b>	2.2 miles (3.5 km)	Moderately Strenuous	This trail follows the rolling hills of the prairie, traverses Lookout Point, and ends at Beaver Creek. Take a side trip up Lookout Point to see the results of the 2010 American Elk Prescribed Fire. This trail can also be combined with part of the Highland Creek Trail, and the Centennial Trail, to create a 4.5-mile loop that begins and ends at the Centennial Trailhead.
<b>Sanctuary Trail</b>	3.6 miles (5.8 km)	Moderately Strenuous	The trail begins about one mile north of the Rankin Ridge fire tower road. This trail follows the rolling hills of the prairie, crosses a large prairie dog town, and ends at the Highland Creek Trail. View the Rankin Ridge fire tower at the intersection of the Centennial Trail. This trail provided a fire break for the 2000 wild-fire of 1,135 acres.
<b>Centennial Trail</b>	6 miles (9.7 km)	Moderately Strenuous	The southern access to the trail is on the east side of S.D. Highway 87. The northern access is on NPS 5, 1.4 miles east of its junction with S.D. Highway 87. This trail is part of a 111-mile trail through the Black Hills. The trail leads hikers across prairies, through forested areas, and along Beaver Creek. The trail is marked with posts and trees bearing the Centennial Trail logo. The trail travels through the 2010 American Elk Prescribed Fire area.
<b>Highland Creek Trail</b>	8.6 miles (13.8 km)	Strenuous	The southern trailhead is along the Wind Cave Canyon Trail one mile east of U.S. Highway 385. The northern trailhead is on NPS 5, 2.8 miles east of S.D. Highway 87. This trail is the longest and the most diverse in the park. The trail traverses mixed-grass prairies, ponderosa pine forests, and riparian habitats of Highland Creek, Beaver Creek, and Wind Cave Canyon.
<b>Boland Ridge Trail</b>	2.6 miles (4.2 km)	Strenuous	The trail begins one mile north of the junction of NPS 5 and NPS 6. This trail climbs to panoramic views of Wind Cave National Park, the Black Hills, Red Valley, and Battle Mountain. Elk are often seen from this trail.

# Returning the Bison to the Wild

## How to Protect a Western Icon

If you take the time to explore the surface world of Wind Cave National Park you may find yourself in the middle of the prairie surrounded by a sea of grass. The golden-tinged afternoon sunlight is softly illuminating the surrounding grasslands. In the distance, you might see a herd of grazing bison as a nearby meadowlark whistles its pleasant song. A gentle breeze brings with it the sweet scent of the flowers and grasses. This is the sunlit world of Wind Cave National Park.



Slaughter of the Buffalo from the Train

herds of bison filled the prairie was fading into the memories of the old timers. Returning the bison to the North American prairie was to become one of the most successful environmental stories of all times, and Wind Cave National Park played an important part in it.

By 1890 the number of wild North American bison was down to a woeful few hundred animals. As early as 1874, bills were introduced into Congress to protect these magnificent animals. But little protection arrived. A few private ranchers took it upon themselves to start small herds from remnant survivors wandering the plains. Frederick Dupree saved nine calves on his ranch near the Moreau River in South Dakota. Charles Goodnight, William Hornaday, Scotty Phillips, and Charles (Buffalo) Jones also rounded up remnant animals. But it was not until a concerted national effort was made that the survival of the species was assured.

This began on December 8, 1905, when a group of 16 people assembled in the Lion House of the New York Zoological Society, all of them interested in working to preserve the bison. This organization became known as the American Bison Society; its primary goal was the preservation of the American buffalo. Among its founders were William Hornaday and Theodore Roosevelt. Wind Cave was one of several bison preserves they created.

But it was not an easy task to start a bison herd. First the preserve had to be established. For Wind Cave National Park that started in 1910. The American Bison Society was looking for a place in South Dakota. Because of the diverse habitats within the park, Wind Cave National Park caught their eye and by 1911 a study by J.A. Loring was done indicating the park could sustain these remarkable animals. Seth Bullock, the US Marshall who once oversaw park management, provided his support saying: *I do not think they could find a better location. There is plenty of water and shelter in the Park, and horses and cattle ranging there this winter are in better shape than any that I have seen elsewhere. The Park is an ideal location.*



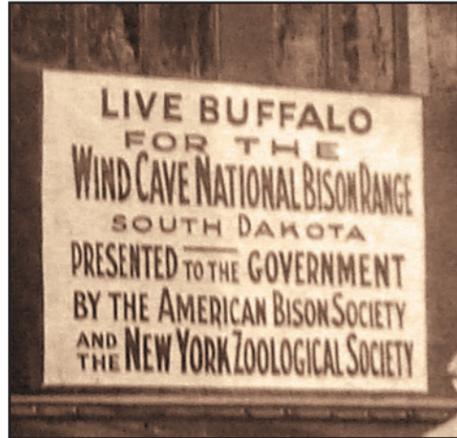
Edge of Forest and Prairie in Wind Cave National Park

## Returning the Wild Ones

The arrangements to supply bison to the preserve started quickly. Hornaday of the New York Zoological Society (the Bronx Zoo) arranged to furnish animals that would be the nucleus of the Wind Cave herd. In his letter he states: *The New York Zoological Society authorizes me to offer the American Bison Society a herd of ten buffaloes, consisting of males and females of various ages... to stock the Wind Cave National Bison Range, whenever it is established by Congress... I need hardly assure you that these will be animals of absolutely pure blood.*

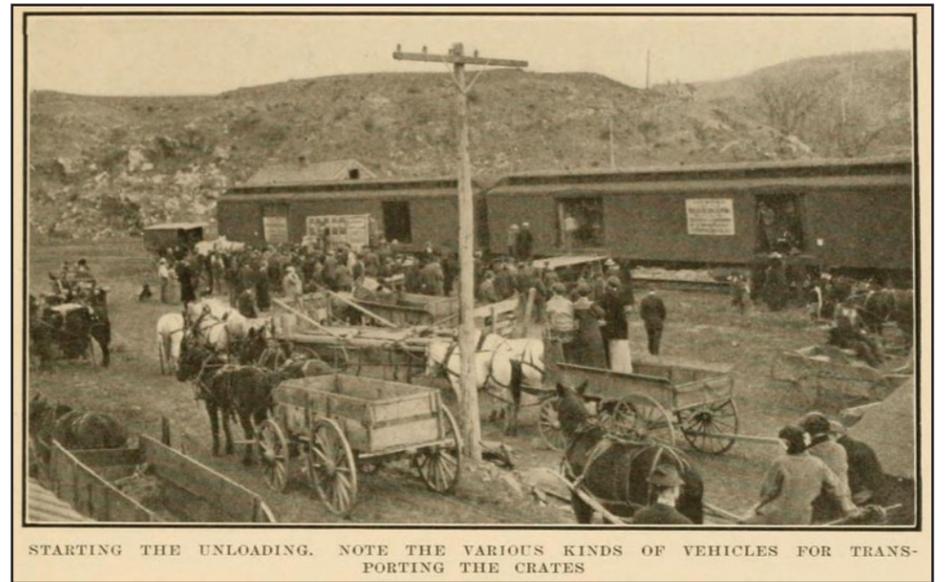
The American Bison Society replied: *This gift is a most valuable one... It comes when Congress has under consideration the establishment of the Wind Cave National Game Preserve. The gift of this nucleus herd will be a strong argument with Congress for establishing the Game Preserve.*

A request to the Secretaries of the Agriculture, James Wilson, and Interior, Richard Ballinger, was made. Through these efforts, Congress established a 4,000-acre Wind Cave Game Preserve in August 1912 to begin the reintroduction process not only of bison, but of many other animals being threatened by changes occurring on the Great Plains. The preserve was to be administered by the U.S. Biological Survey under the Department of Agriculture on land within and adjacent to Wind Cave National Park.



The zoological society not only furnished ten buffalo, but increased the number to fourteen. On Monday, November 24, 1913, the individually crated animals were placed in two new steel express cars and shipped the next day by rail to Hot Springs, SD at an express charge of \$850. The Society reported: *A great deal of interest was taken in the shipment at all stopping points... The explanatory labels attracted attention... crowds gathered quickly and*

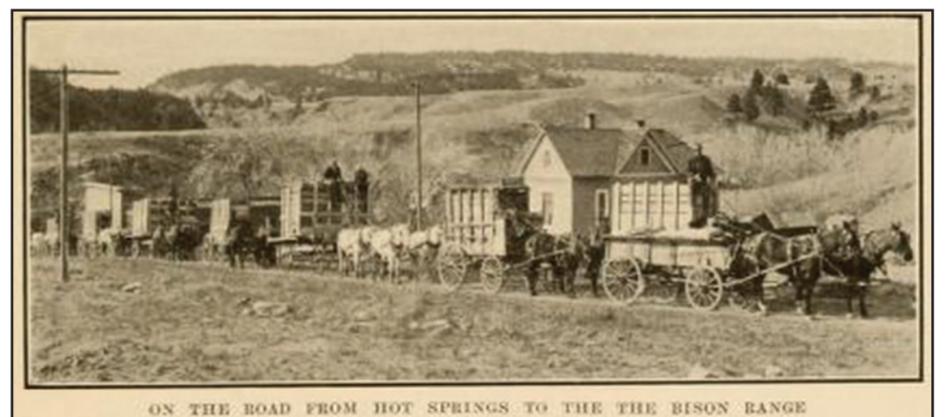
*asked many questions or climbed up to get a look at our strange charges. The herd arrived Friday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, at 9:30 AM in excellent condition. The total cost to get them to the park was \$1,150 and the total time was 63 hours for the trip of two thousand miles.*



Their arrival in Hot Springs caused quite a stir: *By noon the unloading (from the train) was completed and the crates securely lashed or chained to wagons provided by citizens of Hot Springs. It was 7:00 PM when the caravan reached the park. The first animal took its release very calmly and disappeared into the darkness. However, the unloading by the uncertain light of our lanterns and bonfire proved to be a more difficult task. Greatly to the surprise and disappointment of some of our spectators, we had a good deal of trouble in getting some of the bison out of their crates.*

Fred Dille, of the U.S. Biological Survey, in charge of establishing the herd, explained it this way: *To suggest to a buffalo that he must back out of the crate by poking him in the head, will work with an elk but not a bison. Your actions are but a challenge to him and he does not propose to give ground.*

The final result according to the bison society's report was: *In several cases the operation was more like removing the crate from the animal than the animal from the crate. At last our task was over, and it was with something of a feeling of relief that we realized that our trip had been brought to a successful conclusion.*



# Protection Assured

By the end of 1913 the Secretary of Agriculture, D. F. Houston, reported to the American Bison Society: *the Government now has about 315 buffalo, distributed in six herds, the fifth and sixth having been established this year on the Niobrara Reservation, Neb. and the Wind Cave Park, S. Dak. In this connection it is interesting to recall that the nucleus of the first herd, the one now in the National Zoological Park, was acquired twenty-five years ago through the late Eugene Blackford, and consisted of a pair of buffalo captured near Ogallala, Neb. Soon after, four others were presented by Dr. V.T. McGillicuddy, a public spirited citizen of Rapid City, S. Dak. After the lapse of a quarter of a century the government has re-established a herd of buffalo in each of the States from which the original herd was secured. The future of the species now seems assured.*



Rocky Mountain Elk

Secretary Houston praised the Wind Cave herd: *The new preserve on the Wind Cave National Park is one of the most accessible and in certain respects, the best of any of the bison ranges. It is admirably adapted not only for buffalo, but also for elk, deer, and antelope, and preparations are being made for the transfer of a herd of elk this winter. We hope that at*

*an early date the preserve will be ready for visitors and will fulfill in every way the expectations of the American Bison Society.*



Bison and Pronghorn Antelope

In 1914 Fred Dille reported that the buffalo were doing very well: *I would state that the winter was very much in their (the buffalo) favor, there has been no loss and they are in the best of health. It was a new experience to them to be at liberty in an enclosure of this size and to experience some natural grazing, but they accepted the new conditions like "old timers" and rarely a day passed but what they indulged in a good stampede. There are three little calves... We have the making of a very good Reserve.*

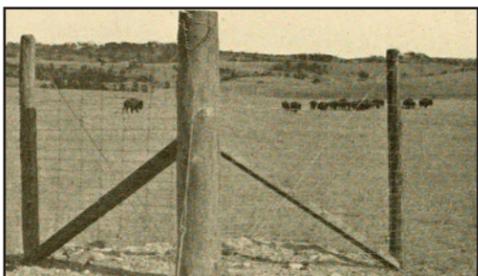


Bison Calves

In 1916, six additional bison were sent to the preserve from Yellowstone National Park. The herd at the Wind Cave National Game Preserve was flourishing and it was not long until there were more bison than there were resources to sustain them. The Preserve increased in size in 1931 when an area around Beaver Creek Canyon was purchased. Several bison were also removed from the herd and sent to other preserves to start additional herds.

## The Continuing Story

With the onset of the Dust Bowl of the 1930s, the need for more land to sustain the wildlife was noticed, and in 1935 the park and preserve merged. At this time a drought relief camp of the Civilian Conservation Corps was located at Wind Cave National Park. They began to remove



Interior Park Fence

interior fences allowing the bison and other wildlife to range throughout most of the park's 11,819 acres.

The care of the animals was given to Wildlife Ranger Estes Suter. Suter had a strong interest in preserving what he defined as bison of the "old days". He worked with Native American

elders and locals to determine what a "true buffalo" really looked like and removed animals from the herd to achieve that goal.

Today the park's herd is well known in the bison conservation world. It is one of a very few that has a high level of genetic diversity, has a brucellosis free status and, according to a 2004 bison genetic study, is free of cattle gene introgression. What does that mean? Early in the history of preserving bison, pioneers were challenged with not only preserving the species but also making it economically successful. To do this, many ranchers experimented with domestic cattle-bison crosses. They hoped to produce a "heartier beef breed" that would be resistant to disease, require less feed, and produce more calves. This tinkering became apparent when

Texas A&M's genetic analysis revealed evidence of domestic cattle gene introgression in many of the bison herds studied.

Today, unlike when Estes Suter sat on top of his car to decide which bison to keep and which to remove, park biologists strive to protect the herd through scientific testing. Ideally, "wild" bison would live in free-ranging, naturally regulated herds. But that is not possible. Most herds are confined and subjected to varying degrees of management. Therefore herd size, population structure, levels of genetic variation, and the incidence of domestic cattle introgression must all be considered in the park's management decisions.

For Wind Cave, the effort to establish a wild bison herd started with 14 animals. The importance of the efforts made to return these animals to the wild was noted when one of the original 14 died. The bison, named "Sandy" because of his light color, *succumbed to the rigors of his 24th winter* in December 1936. The newspaper conveyed it well: *There are doubtless hundreds of buffaloes born on the plains which spent their last days in some park or zoo, but Sandy was one of the few to be born in a zoo and to die on the open range.*

Suter, Hornaday, Roosevelt, Dille, today's resource managers, and others have taken part in this adventure. They have provided us with the opportunity to see bison born and raised on an "open range", and, if we are lucky, to see a herd so large they seem to fill the prairie.



## Connections - the Past and the Future

Sometimes the two worlds of Wind Cave National Park seem disconnected, but stories from the area's American Indian tribes tie the two together in an unusual manner. One connection between the vast underground world of Wind Cave and the sunlit world of the prairie is the cave's only known natural entrance.

This entrance responds to changes in atmospheric pressures. During rising barometric pressures air is forced into the cave and, when the pressure falls, air blows out of the cave. This causes the cave to seem to breathe.

The winds at the entrance of Wind Cave have drawn the attention of people for eons. American Indian oral history dating back thousands of years speaks of a "hole that breathes cool air" near the Buffalo Gap. Regarded as the origin site for the Lakota people, it is considered a sacred place.

One of the stories about the entrance to the cave tells of a beautiful woman, known as the buffalo woman, who came out of the cave and gave the bison to the Lakota people. Sitting Bull's nephew is quoted as saying: *Wind Cave in the Black Hills was the cave from which Wakan Tanka, the Great Mystery, sent the buffalo out to the Sioux hunting grounds.*

The history of Wind Cave National Park also seems to support the connection between the cave and the bison. Just before the park was considered as a preserve for the bison, Richard Ballinger, Secretary of the Interior reviewed a report stating: *Owing to its inaccessibility and the fact that its scenic attraction is not sufficient, in all probability, to inspire a greater number of visitors to the park. . . (It) can never in any sense of the word become a national park.*

There is a school of thought that believes that the establishment of the game preserve "saved" Wind Cave National Park. It is quite possible that the protection of this small national park containing a spectacular cave and an underappreciated prairie ecosystem was secured by the return of the buffalo. Together the cave and the bison are the foundation of what makes Wind Cave National Park one of our country's remarkable natural resources.



Estes Suter Reviewing Bison Herd



The Bison, Prairie, and Cave Connected

# Park Information

## Cave Tours

### Cave Tour Information

All cave tours are ranger-guided and leave from the visitor center. The cave temperature is 53°F(11°C) year round. A jacket or sweater is recommended. Shoes are required. Sandals are not recommended. Any clothing, foot-wear, or gear worn in caves from states where white-nose syndrome is found are not permitted on any cave tour.

Tickets are sold at the visitor center. ***Tickets must be purchased at least five minutes before tour times.***



Cave Boxwork

### Garden of Eden Tour 1 hour, ¼ mile

This tour is the least strenuous with only 150 stairs. It is a wonderful sample of Wind Cave. Small amounts of all of the beautiful cave formations – boxwork, popcorn, and flowstone – are seen along the

trail. This tour is for people with limited time or abilities as it spends less time walking and more time talking. This tour enters and exits the cave by elevator.



### Natural Entrance Tour 1¼ hours, ½ mile

This tour includes a visit to the only known natural entrance of Wind Cave giving visitors the opportunity to see how the cave got its name. Participants enter the cave through a man-made entrance and journey through the middle level of the cave. Wind Cave's famous boxwork is abundant throughout this trip. Popcorn and frostwork can also be seen along the trail. Most of the 300 stairs along this route are down. This tour is moderately strenuous and exits the cave by elevator.

### Fairgrounds Tour 1½ hours, ½ mile

This tour explores both the upper and middle levels of Wind Cave. Boxwork is abundant along the trail in the middle level of the cave. In the upper level, the trail winds through large rooms and into areas where popcorn and frostwork can be seen. This is the most strenuous walking tour. The tour enters and exits the cave by elevator. There are 450 stairs along the route with one flight of 90 steps up.

### Candlelight Tour 2 hours, 1 mile

Experience the cave by candlelight. This tour takes place in a less developed, unlighted part of the cave. Each participant will carry a candle bucket. Shoes with non-slip soles are required. No sandals of any kind are permitted. This tour is limited to 10 people and the minimum age is 8. This strenuous tour covers one mile of rugged trail. ***Reservations are strongly recommended.*** Reservations are accepted beginning one month before the tour. Call the park at 605-745-4600 for reservations or more information.

### Tours For Visitors With Special Needs

The visitor center and the cave are accessible to people with limited mobility. Please call to make special arrangements or ask at the information desk for a special tour. Limited areas of the cave are accessible to wheelchairs. The fee for the tour is \$5.00 for adults and half price for Senior or Access pass holders.



Cave Frostwork and Popcorn

### Wild Cave Tour 4 hours, ½ mile

Explore the cave away from the developed trails. On this tour visitors will be introduced to the basics of safe caving.

Wear old clothes and gloves, as much of the trip includes crawling. Long pants, long sleeved shirts, and sturdy, lace-up boots or shoes with non-slip soles are required. No sandal of any kind is permitted on this tour. The park provides hard hats, lights, and kneepads.

Please do not bring jewelry, watches, or other valuables on the tour. Clothing worn on the Jewel Cave Wild Cave Tour is not permitted in Wind Cave since this clothing could be covered with manganese, which could stain the cave. Clothing and gear used in areas with potential white-nose syndrome contamination are not permitted in the cave.

This tour is limited to 10 people and the minimum age is 16. We require a signed parental consent form for participants 16 and 17 years old.

***Reservations are required.*** Reservations are accepted beginning one month before the tour. Call the park at 605-745-4600 for reservations or more information.

## Learning about the Park

Wind Cave offers a variety of wonderful opportunities to learn about the natural resources of the park. Exploring the visitor center, participating in the Junior Ranger Program, or hiking in the park are some great ways to discover what is special about this national park.

### Become a Junior Ranger

The Junior Ranger Program is an exciting opportunity for children and their families to learn about the park. Becoming a Junior Ranger helps youngsters understand the park's ecosystems, the cave, and the wildlife. It also helps them learn how they can help protect all parts of our environment. Free Junior Ranger booklets are available at the bookstore.

### Explore Our Website

Another way to learn about the park is by exploring our website. You can learn about the adventures of current and past explorers of the cave, build a better understanding

of the history of wildlife management, or discover more about the plants of the park. These and many other interesting topics can be found at [www.nps.gov/wica/](http://www.nps.gov/wica/).

### Join Us on Facebook

Want to keep current about what's happening in the park? Our Facebook page allows you to explore the park without driving all the way out here. See what's happening throughout the year, learn about special activities, and watch the wildlife as the seasons change.

### Bring Your Class to the Park

Teachers wanting an educational opportunity for their students can participate in regular cave tours or the park's Connections or Water in the Environment program. Both programs allow students to explore the park with a ranger. The programs are offered in May and are free. For more information call the park at 605-745-4600.

## Serving to Preserve

The Friends of Wind Cave National Park is a new organization supporting and promoting Wind Cave National Park. Lon Sharp, President of the Friends Group, states their vision as: "expanding the awareness of the unique value of Wind Cave."

The Friends group has assisted the park in several ways in the short time they have been organized. They helped place a bronze plaque honoring Stephen Mather near the visitor center and, on National Public Lands Day, spent time removing barbed wire fencing on the new Sanson Ranch addition property.

To help celebrate the acquisition of the ranch, the Friends hosted a July 7, 2012 celebration. Park personnel

were on hand at the homestead to guide tours to the prehistoric buffalo jump. Later in the day about 200 participants enjoyed a chuck wagon supper while listening to live western music. The event was capped by a highly entertaining performance by Teddy Roosevelt!

"This year the Friends plan to help the park celebrate the return of the buffalo herd," said Friends president Lon Sharp. Plans are not complete at this time, but a celebration similar to the Ranch acquisition are in the works. The organization hopes that local park supporters, present and past employees, and anyone interested in helping support the park will attend this upcoming festivity. For the exact date, time, and place of the event, visit the organization's website listed below.

Friends groups are important organizations because they form a partnership between the community and the park. Members act as ambassadors to help extend the presence and values of the park into the community. They also help leverage the work of park employees through donated labor and funds and promote a strong sense of stewardship of park resources. If you are interested in becoming a Friend of Wind Cave National Park visit [www.friendsofwindcavenp.org](http://www.friendsofwindcavenp.org).



Participants in the Park's Junior Ranger Program



Lon Sharp with Mather Plaque

# Ranger Programs

## Cave Tour Fees

Tickets must be purchased at least five minutes before tour time

	Garden of Eden Cave Tour	Natural Entrance Cave Tour	Fairgrounds Cave Tour	Candlelight Cave Tour	Wild Cave Tour
<b>Adult</b> 17 & Older	\$7.00	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$9.00	\$23.00
<b>Youth</b> age 6 - 16	\$3.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	*\$4.50	**Not Permitted
<b>Infants and Toddlers</b> age 0 - 5	Free	Free	Free	Not Permitted	Not Permitted
<b>Senior/ Access Pass</b> cardholders only	\$3.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$4.50	\$11.50

\* Minimum age for Candlelight Tour is 8

\*\* Minimum age for Wild Cave Tour is 16. The fee is \$23.00  
For descriptions of the tours, see page 6.



## Cave Tour Safety and Information



All tours are ranger-guided and leave from the visitor center. Tickets are sold on a first-come, first-served basis except for the Candlelight and Wild Cave tours (see Reservations below). During peak summer visitation, long waits for tours may be encountered. To avoid waits, the best time to visit the cave is during the early hours of the day. During the summer, weekends are good times to visit; Tuesdays and Wednesdays are the busiest days. Reservations for school and organized groups are available (see Reservations.)

Wind Cave is 53°F (11°C) throughout the year so a sweater or jacket are recommended. Shoes are required on all tours. Cave trails are dimly lighted and trail surfaces may be uneven, wet, and slippery. Do not wear sandals. Ceilings along the tour route are low, requiring some bending.

There are no restrooms in the cave. No eating, drinking, smoking, chewing tobacco or gum is allowed in the cave. For the protection of the cave, do not touch or remove rocks or formations and do not step off the trail.

Cave tours are moderately strenuous. Persons with claustrophobia, heart or respiratory conditions, or other physical limitations should reconsider. A tour is available, by request, for visitors with special needs. Call 605-745-4600 or ask at the information desk.

Photography is permitted, but no tripods. Pets are not allowed in the cave. Do not leave your pets in your vehicle while visiting the cave. See Page 2 for more information about pets in the park.

Any clothing, foot-wear, or gear worn in caves from states where white-nose syndrome is found are not permitted on any cave tour.

### Reservations

Tickets for most cave tours are sold on a first-come, first-served basis; however, reservations are accepted for schools or large groups. Reservations are strongly recommended for the more strenuous Candlelight Tour and required for the Wild Cave (spelunking) Tour. Reservations are accepted beginning one month before the tour and must be made by phone. Call 605-745-4600 for information or reservations.

## Program Schedule

### April 21 – May 4, 2013

Visitor Center: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Natural Entrance Cave Tour: 9:30, 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30



### May 5 – May 24, 2013

Visitor Center: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Natural Entrance Cave Tour: 9:00, 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 2:30, and 4:00

### May 25 – May 27, 2013, Memorial Day Weekend

Visitor Center: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden Tour: 10:00, 12:00, and 2:00

Fairgrounds Tour: 11:00, 1:00, and 3:00

Natural Entrance Tour: 9:20, 10:30, 11:30, 12:30, 1:30, 2:30, 3:30, 4:30, and 5:00

### May 28 – June 8, 2013

Visitor Center: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden Tour: 1:30 and 3:30

Natural Entrance Tour: 9:30, 10:00, 11:00, 1:00, 2:00, 4:00, and 5:00

### June 9 – August 10, 2013

Visitor Center: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden Tour: 10:40, 12:40, and 2:40

Natural Entrance Tour: 9:20, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, and 5:30

Fairgrounds Tour: 9:40, 10:20, 11:40, 12:20, 1:40, 2:20, 3:40, and 4:20

Candlelight Tour: 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Wild Cave Tour: 1:00 p.m.

### August 11 – September 2, 2013

Visitor Center: 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Garden of Eden Tour: 10:30, 1:40 and 3:40

Natural Entrance Tour: 9:20, 10:00, 11:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, and 5:00

Fairgrounds Tour: 9:30, 11:20, 1:20, and 3:20

Candlelight Tour: 1:30 p.m.

Wild Cave Tour: 1:00 p.m. **Weekends Only** August 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, 31, and September 1

### September 3 – September 21, 2013

Visitor Center: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Natural Entrance Tour: 9:00, 10:30, 11:30, 1:30, 2:30, and 4:00

### September 22 – October 12, 2013

Visitor Center: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Natural Entrance Tour: 9:30, 11:30, 1:30, and 3:30

### October 13, 2013 – Early April, 2014

Visitor Center: 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. daily except Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day

Garden of Eden Cave Tour: 10:00, 1:00, and 3:00

**Tour schedules are subject to change. Please call 605-745-4600 to confirm tour times. Programs are subject to cancellation during severe weather.**

*For the protection of the cave, do not touch or remove rocks or formations and do not step off the trail.*

## IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

**Dial 911**

**or contact any park ranger or call the park's visitor center at 605-745-4600.**



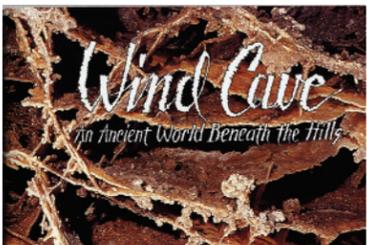
## The Black Hills Parks & Forests Association

**Black Hills Parks & Forests Association** is a non-profit partner cooperating with state and federal agencies in the Black Hills area to promote public understanding, appreciation and stewardship of the Black Hills' natural and cultural heritage. This is achieved by operating park stores at Wind Cave National Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, Custer State Park, Black Hills National Forest, and National Grasslands Visitor Centers.

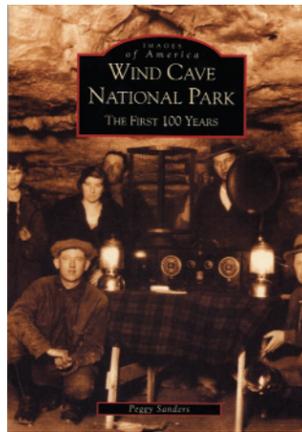
Your purchase from the Wind Cave National Park store helps support interpretive programming at the park. Proceeds from park store sales provide financial aid to partner agencies. Aid money is used to print interpretive materials, fund internship positions, purchase educational

and interpretive supplies and equipment, and provide assistance toward research projects. The association carries many different items in the bookstore, some specific to Wind Cave National Park and all relating to the Black Hills. Products include books, maps, pins and patches, games, and toys. Most products are available from the website – [www.blackhillsparcs.org](http://www.blackhillsparcs.org) or by mail order – call 605-745-7020.

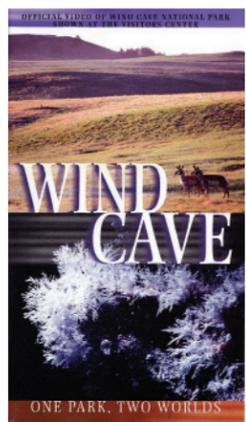
Become a member of Black Hills Parks & Forests Association for only \$29.95 a year. Your membership supports public lands and entitles you to member discounts at all BHPFA park store locations as well as public land stores across the country. For more member information, sign up in the store or call 605-745-7020.



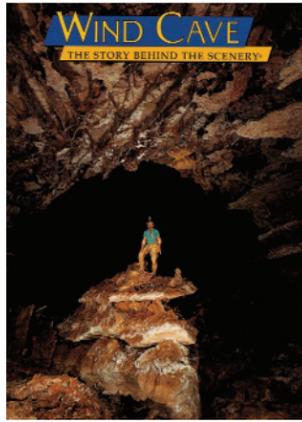
**Wind Cave: An Ancient World Beneath the Hills** - In this wonderful, easy-to-read book, Art Palmer explains the geology of Wind Cave, how it is related to the Black Hills, and how the cave and its formations formed. The charts and graphs help make the topic easily understood by people unfamiliar with geology. The pictures of the unusual Wind Cave boxwork alone make this book well worth the investment. **\$9.95**



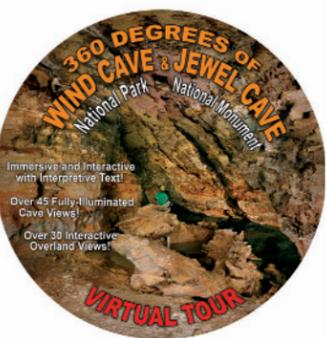
**Wind Cave National Park: the First 100 Years** - In 1903, Wind Cave National Park became the eighth national park in the nation and the first park created to protect a cave. Peggy Sanders encapsulates the park's fascinating 100 year history in over 200 vintage images. Travel through time with the early cave and animal management teams, through the Great Depression, and into the present with an amazing collection of classic pictures and stories. **\$21.99**



**Wind Cave: One Park, Two Worlds** - takes viewers on a journey into two vastly different landscapes of uncompromising beauty - the prairie and the cave. This 20-minute movie tells the dramatic stories of Wind Cave National Park's natural and human history, including the story of Alvin MacDonald - the first explorer of this subterranean world and the story of the bison - the symbol of the Great Plains. Through breathtaking photography this video captures the spirit, mystery, and beauty of one of America's oldest National Parks. **\$19.95**



**Wind Cave, The Story Behind the Scenery** - If you are interested in learning more about the ecosystems, wildlife, and history of Wind Cave National Park, this book by Ron Terry is an excellent choice. It contains outstanding photographs and information about the cave and its unusual boxwork formation. This book goes beyond the cave, including photos and insights about the park's incredible prairie. This book is part of a series by KC Publications that explores the natural, geological, and cultural history of the national parks. **\$11.95**



**Take a 360 degree Tour of Wind Cave National Park.** This CD has over seventy immersive and interactive panoramic views of Wind Cave National Park and Jewel Cave National Monument. Share the views of the cave or the prairie that you enjoyed on your visit or explore the wilderness of the cave through pictures. The CDs play on your Mac or PC computers allowing you to see maps, photographs, and a 3D model of the cave. The 3D program provides views of the underground and surface world of both parks. **\$18.95**



**Trails Illustrated Map, Black Hills South** - If you are interested in hiking, this is the trail map to have. This tear-proof, waterproof map details the Southern Black Hills from Mount Rushmore to the Cheyenne River. Wind Cave National Park, Custer State Park, Jewel Cave National Monument, Mount Rushmore National Memorial, the Southern Black Hills National Forest, and the Centennial and Mickelson Trails are included. The map is part of a series of National Geographic Trails Illustrated Maps. There is also a Black Hills North map detailing the northern half of the Black Hills National Forest. **\$11.95** Buy a combo pack of Black Hills North and South for only **\$19.95**

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	Subtotal	(-)
	15% Member Discount	(+)
	Shipping	(+)
	SD orders add 5.5% sales tax	(+)
	Membership at 29.95 each	(+)
	Total	

Mail to: Black Hills Parks & Forests Association  
26611 U.S. Hwy 385  
Hot Springs, SD 57747  
Fax to: 605-745-7021  
Website: [www.blackhillsparcs.org](http://www.blackhillsparcs.org)



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Black Hills Parks & Forests Assn.

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Mail tube (cave maps)                      \$4.00